

BREEDING OF THE SPUR-WINGED GOOSE *PLECTOPTERUS GAMBENSIS* IN ETHIOPIA

The Spur-winged Goose, although locally abundant in Ethiopia, is not nearly so widespread as indicated by Urban & Brown's *Checklist* (1971), and there are now four breeding records for the country. The distribution of this goose is confined to two areas, one in central Ethiopia extending from Lake Tana (12°00'N, 37°20'E) in the north to the Rift Valley as far south as Awasa (7°03'N, 38°27'E), and eastwards to Awash Park (9°N, 40°E); the other is along the Baro River from Gambela (8°15'N, 34°38'E) westwards to the Sudan border at Jokau (8°22'N, 33°47'E).

The species is present in every month of the year, often in flocks of up to 200-300 birds (although there are no reports of flocks in excess of 50 birds in May, June, November and December). Since the publication of the *Checklist* (*op. cit.*), at which time breeding was unknown, there have been four records:

1. Lake Abiata (7°41'N, 38°37'E), Rift Valley, 9 goslings c. 2 weeks old on 9 October 1971 (*pers. obs.*).
2. Bahar Dar (11°35'N, 37°25'E), Lake Tana, 5 goslings about two-thirds grown on 27 December 1971 (*pers. obs.*).
3. Lake Zwai (8°05'N, 38°50'E), a young bird hand-reared from one of 11 chipping eggs found on the north shore in mid October 1976 (Alamargot 1980).
4. Awash Park area. (I do not have the original reference for this record shown on the Ethiopian Distribution Scheme map.)

The first two and the last of these breeding areas, together with other sightings of non-breeding birds are shown on Snow's (1978) map.

The paucity of breeding records indicates that this species is merely an irregular breeder in Ethiopia. It has a wide range within the Afrotropical Region, and breeds in many areas within this range to as far north as 17° on the Niger and in Senegal in West Africa, south to the Cape. In Ethiopia, eggs are laid in August - September towards the end of the big rains when the country is at its wettest.

Although unknown in Ethiopia east of the Rift Valley, it occurs in Kenya, where it is widespread, as a locally numerous resident breeder and wanderer from 3000 m down to the coast (Britton 1980, Snow 1978). It is unknown in Somalia, but may be expected to occur in the southern wetlands.

## REFERENCES

- ALAMARGOT, J. 1980. Nesting data - probably the first - on the Spur-winged Goose in Ethiopia. *Ethiopian Wildlife & Natural History Society Newsletter* 154: 2.
- URBAN, E.K. & BROWN, L.H. 1971. *A checklist of the birds of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press.

J.S. Ash, Division of Birds, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, U.S.A.

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A BREEDING RECORD FOR CASSIN'S HAWK EAGLE *HIERAAETUS AFRICANUS* Cassin's Hawk Eagle is perhaps one of the least known of Africa's large raptors, being restricted to tropical forests where observation of the species is difficult. Though its distribution ranges from West Africa, across the equatorial forest belt, and into the forests of western Uganda (Bannerman 1953, Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1957, Williams 1967) it appears that there are no breeding records